

occupant of the vehicle seat who is forward in the vehicle seat backward toward a back portion of the vehicle seat,

the pretensioner comprising a seat belt retractor, the seat belt retractor including a spool on which the seat belt webbing is wound and an electric motor for rotating the spool in a belt retraction direction to pull the occupant backward toward the back portion of the vehicle seat, the electric motor and the spool generating a force in the seat belt webbing greater than a force required to only remove slack from the seat belt webbing.

15. (Twice Amended) A vehicle occupant safety system for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle seat during a crash condition, the system comprising:

at least one sensor for sensing a vehicle crash condition and generating a signal indicative of the crash condition;

seat belt webbing for extending around the vehicle occupant;

a pretensioner responsive to the signal generated by the sensor for acting on the seat belt webbing to pull an occupant of the vehicle seat who is forward in the vehicle seat backward toward a back portion of the vehicle seat; and

the pretensioner comprising a gear assembly for transmitting power from an electric motor to a spool on which the seat belt webbing is wound, rotation of the electric motor causing wobbling of a part of the gear assembly, wobbling of

the part of the gear assembly causing rotation of the spool in a belt retraction direction.

16. (Amended) A vehicle occupant safety system for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle seat during a crash condition, the system comprising:

a first sensor for sensing a vehicle crash condition and generating a first signal indicative of the crash condition;

a second sensor for sensing a vehicle impending crash condition and generating a second signal indicative of the pre-crash condition;

seat belt webbing for extending around the vehicle occupant; and

a pretensioner responsive to the first signal and the second signal for acting on the seat belt webbing to pull an occupant of the vehicle seat who is forward in the vehicle seat backward toward a back portion of the vehicle seat,

the pretensioner comprising a seat belt retractor, the seat belt retractor including a spool on which the seat belt webbing is wound and an electric motor for rotating the spool in a belt retraction direction to pull the occupant backward toward the back portion of the vehicle seat,

the electric motor having a first mode of operation, a second mode of operation, and a third mode of operation,

the first mode of operation occurring in an absence of the first signal from the first sensor or the second signal from the second sensor, in the first mode of operation the

electric motor rotates the spool in the belt retraction direction and in a belt withdrawal direction, opposite the belt retraction direction;

the second mode of operation occurring upon receipt of the first signal from the first sensor, in the second mode of operation the electric motor rotates the spool in the belt retraction direction initiating a first force to pull the occupant backward toward the back portion of the vehicle seat,

the third mode of operation occurring upon receipt of the second signal from the second sensor, in the third mode of operation the electric motor rotates the spool in the belt retraction direction thereby initiating a second force to pull the occupant backward toward the back portion of the vehicle seat, the second force being less than the first force, the second force in the seat belt webbing being greater than a force required to only remove slack from the seat belt webbing.